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XIII.—SPENSER'S IMITATIONS FROM ARIOSTO: SUPPLEMENTARY

In these *Publications*, vol. XII (1897), Professor R. E. Neil Dodge, in an article entitled *Spenser's Imitations from Ariosto*, described and commented on a large number of parallels between the two poets. This work was so thoroughly done that no one can expect to add greatly to his lists. Yet one cannot ever be sure of having exhausted the similarities between *The Faerie Queene* and the *Orlando Furioso*, and later gleaners, as Professor Dodge understood, may expect to be regarded with scattered ears. Since our knowledge of the relation of these two poems cannot be too full, I present here a few additional observations.

Ariosto invariably closes his cantos with some remark to the effect that he is now ending the canto. These remarks vary in length from less than one verse to four verses. The same use of a concluding formula is to be observed in Spenser, but not invariably. The Ariosto-like conclusion is found but once¹ in the First Book, and not at all in the Second Book; in the Third Book it appears twice, in the Fourth ten times, out of a possible twelve, in the Fifth but five, and in the Sixth seven times. At the close of a canto Ariosto usually and characteristically says that it now is long enough, and should be concluded; Spenser often follows him closely, as in this instance:

The which for length I will not here pursew,
But rather will reserve it for a Canto new.²

¹ I have not counted the last stanza of the book, which is somewhat in the manner of Ariosto, but concludes the book rather than the canto.

² *F. Q.*, 4, 2, 54.

However, direct address to the reader, which Ariosto frequently employs in ending his cantos, is found but once in Spenser.³ Ariosto shows much variety, sometimes representing himself as hoarse, and desiring rest, and once, with a reminiscence of Dante,⁴ writing:

Poichè da tutti i lati ho pieno il foglio,
Finire il Canto, e riposar mi voglio.⁵

Spenser imitates this, with characteristic modification, as follows:

Which, for my Muse her selfe now tyred has,
Unto an other Canto I will overpas.⁶

Ariosto is always more matter-of-fact than that. A metaphorical close still more foreign to him is this:

And turne we here to this faire furrowes end
Our wearie yokes, to gather fresher sprights,
That when as time to Artegall shall tend,
We on his first adventure may him forward send.⁷

The purpose of these conclusions is to assure the reader that though the canto is ended the story is not, and that his curiosity to know the rest of it will be gratified. They also serve to give the appearance of completeness to the cantos, which—always in Ariosto and sometimes in Spenser—would otherwise appear incomplete and abruptly broken off. In one instance, however, Spenser uses the formal conclusion for the opposite purpose, writing

So ended he his tale, where I this Canto end.⁸

It is, indeed, characteristic of Ariosto's art as a narrator that he never makes the canto a real unit, with which sections of narrative begin or end, but, for the sake of increas-

³ *F. Q.*, 3, 8, 52.

⁴ *Purgatorio*, 33, 139-41.

⁵ Canto 33.

⁶ *F. Q.*, 4, 11, 53.

⁷ *F. Q.*, 5, 3, 40. Cf. 4, 5, 46.

⁸ *F. Q.*, 4, 10, 58.

ing the interest of his reader, chooses to close a canto in the midst of important or lively action, sometimes carrying the narrative but a few stanzas into the next canto. In addition, whenever he gives up for a time one section of his narrative, he does it at such a point that the reader is left in suspense. As a result, the various actions of his poem do not glide into each other, but there is usually an abrupt transition from one set of characters to another. He handles these transitions as he does the concluding lines of the cantos, being not often content with the impersonal "meanwhile" of a classical epic transition, but preferring to say something like the following:

Non più di questo; chè tornar bisogna
A chi Ruggiero invan sospira e agogna.*

Spenser more commonly makes his narratives pass easily into one another, by some such device as a meeting of parties of knights, or he makes a transition without calling attention to it, yet he also uses the method of Ariosto. This appears, as one might expect, most often in the later books; not at all in Book One, twice in Book Two, thrice in Book Three, five times in Book Four, thrice in Book Five, and seven times in Book Six. In Spenser, though not in Ariosto, a transition of this kind sometimes comes at the beginning of a canto. The cantos of *The Faerie Queene* are shorter, and hence more easily made units of narrative than those of the *Orlando*, and their author is less concerned with narrative effect; hence he does not break off his tale at an exciting point so consistently as his predecessor, though he frequently does it. One of his transitions most like Ariosto in this respect, as well as in general manner, runs thus:

* *O. F.*, 30, 75.

But by what meanes that shame to her befell,
 And how thereof her selfe she did acquite,
 I must a while forbear to you to tell;
 Till that, as comes by course, I doe recite,
 What fortune to the Briton Prince did lye,
 Pursuing that proud Knight, the which whileare
 Wrought to Sir Calidore so foule despight;
 And eke his Lady, though she sickly were,
 So lewdly had abusde, as ye did lately heare.¹⁰

A transition which in its figurative language is unlike those of Ariosto is this:

Now turne againe my teme thou jolly swayne,
 Backe to the furrow which I lately left;
 I lately left a furrow, one or twayne
 Unplough'd, the which my coulter hath not cleft:
 Yet seem'd the soyle both fayre and frutefull eft,
 As I it past, that were too great a shame,
 That so rich frute should be from us bereft;
 Besides the great dishonour and defame,
 Which should befall to Calidores immortall name.¹¹

By a second sort of transition, related to those already mentioned, Ariosto frequently, but not invariably, passes from the stanzas with which he usually introduces his cantos to the narrative itself; the narrative is always a continuation of that of the preceding canto. Spenser also uses this transition, which should not be confused with those of the first type appearing near the beginning of a canto which does not carry on the narrative of the preceding canto. To take one of the clearest and most Ariosto-like examples, we see Spenser closing a canto, which deals with Satyrane and Paridell, as follows:

All yfere
 Forth marched to a Castle them before,
 Where soone arriving, they restrained were
 Of readie entrance, which ought evermore

¹⁰ *F. Q.*, 6, 6, 17.

¹¹ *F. Q.*, 6, 9, 1.

To errant knights be commun: wondrous sore
 Thereat displeased they were, till that young Squire
 Gan them informe the cause, why that same dore
 Was shut to all, which lodging did desire:
 The which to let you weet, will further time require.

After opening the next canto with two introductory stanzas, Spenser continues:

Then listen Lordings, if ye list to weet
 The cause, why Satyrane and Paridell
 Mote not be entertayned, as seemed meet,
 Into that Castle (as that Squire does tell.) ¹²

These clearly marked transitions, especially those of the first sort, serve a useful purpose. In a poem involving so many easily confused characters as the *Orlando*, it is necessary that their deeds be kept distinct, if the reader is to grasp the story. As part of the transition, Ariosto and Spenser usually give a summary of the end of the last part of the story again to be taken up. This aids the reader to recall the last situation, and prepares him for what is to follow, thus greatly increasing the clarity of the poems.

It appears that the adoption by Spenser of these formal signs of the narrative method of his predecessor corresponds with a genuine change in the nature of his work; for the last four books of *The Faerie Queene* are more like the *Orlando* than the first two, being more romantic and less evidently allegorical than they; the Fifth, where the indications of Ariosto's influence I have pointed out are fewer than in the Fourth or the Sixth, is the most plainly allegorical of the four. One would expect the Third Book to have a larger number of formal endings and transitions; in their employment Spenser seems to have yielded slowly

¹² *F. Q.*, 3, 8, 52; 3, 9, 3. Cf. *O. F.*, 4, 72, 7-8; 5, 4, 4-8.

to the influence of his predecessor. The last four books of *The Faerie Queene* resemble the *Orlando* in their narrative method even more than in their tendency to romantic rather than obviously allegorical matter. The narrative of Books Three, Four, and Five reminds one, in its construction, of fifteen cantos or so of the *Orlando*. Almost all of the important characters of these books are found in all three, or in at least two of the three; even Artegal, the hero of the Fifth Book, figures in Books Three and Four. The Sixth Book, however, though it bears a considerable number of the traces of the narrative form of Ariosto which I have spoken of, is not closely connected with the others. All of its important characters (excluding Prince Arthur), except Turpine and the Blatant Beast are confined to it alone. Yet Spenser does not here return to the manner of the first book, but gives much the kind of narrative one would find in some five cantos of the *Orlando*; so this book is in nature like the three preceding. The incomplete state of some of its stories leads one to think that with it Spenser was beginning another series of linked books, similar to Books Three, Four, and Five, in which the methods of Ariosto would have been prominent.

It is appropriate that in the last four books, which are so much in the manner of Ariosto, Spenser should employ the lesser, but characteristic, narrative devices of the Italian. Such imitation strengthens the feeling, already produced by observing the value of these devices, that they are genuine and essential, though minor, characteristics of the form of such works as the *Orlando Furioso*. A further conclusion might be that Spenser's wavering use of these devices shows that his appreciation of form is less developed than that of his Italian master.

Of the following lists, the first gives a few parallels between Spenser and Ariosto not noted by Professor Dodge; the second gives Spenser's conclusions, and the third his transitions, in the manner of Ariosto.

PARALLELS BETWEEN SPENSER AND ARIOSTO

The Faerie Queene, 1

- 12, 42. This, as well as 12, 1, may be compared with *O. F.*, 46, 1 ff.

The Faerie Queene, 3

- 2, 41. Cf. *O. F.*, 25, 36.
 7, 34. More nearly parallel than *O. F.*, 26, 111 is *O. F.*, 40, 31.
 8, 52, 5-9 and 9, 3, 1-4. Cf. the method of *O. F.*, 4, 72, 7-8 and 5, 4, 4-8.

The Faerie Queene, 4

- 6, 20. Cf. *O. F.*, 32, 79, also imitated in *F. Q.*, 3, 1, 43; 3, 9, 20; 4, 1, 13; 5, 5, 12.
 7, 5-7. Cf. *O. F.*, 17, 30. Spenser omits the modified eyes of the Orco from his description of Lust. Lust's conduct towards his female prisoners is the opposite to that of the Orco; Lust violates and devours women, the Orco does not injure them, but devours men.
 8, 45. Cf. *O. F.*, 46, 140.

The Faerie Queene, 5

- 2, 18. Cf. *O. F.*, 46, 140.
 5, 12. Cf. *O. F.*, 32, 79.
 8, 37. Cf. *O. F.*, 10, 107-10; 22, 85-7.

The Faerie Queene, 6

- 1, 13 ff. The "custome lewd and ill" of Briana bears some resemblance to the "costuma ria" of Marganor. She disgraces knights by shaving off their beards, and ladies by cutting off their hair; he disgraces ladies by cutting off their garments (*O. F.*, 37, 42). Cf. 2 Samuel, 10, 4.
- 5, 11, 7. Cf. *O. F.*, 34, 80, 7.
- 7, 24. Cf. *O. F.*, 39, 37. Professor Dodge has remarked that the "salvage man" is something like the mad Orlando. Here they have the same weapon. The exploit of Orlando is somewhat like those of Talus with his flail.
- 8, 50-51. Cf. *O. F.*, 11, 55-59.
- 12, 1. Cf. *O. F.*, 46, 1 ff.

CONCLUSIONS IN THE MANNER OF ARIOSTO

F. Q., 1, 6, 48.—3, 8, 52; 12, 45.—4, 2, 54; 4, 48; 5, 46; 6, 47; 7, 47; 8, 64; 9, 41; 10, 58; 11, 53; 12, 35.—5, 3, 40; 5, 57; 7, 45; 8, 51; 12, 43.—6, 2, 48; 3, 51; 5, 41; 7, 50; 8, 51; 9, 46; 10, 44.

TRANSITIONS IN THE MANNER OF ARIOSTO

F. Q., 2, 2, 11; 11, 4.—3, 6, 54; 8, 43; 11, 3.—4, 4, 2; 5, 2; 5, 28; 7, 2; 11, 1.—5, 1, 3; 9, 1; 11, 36.—6, 5, 11; 6, 17; 7, 27; 8, 31; 9, 1; 12, 14; 12, 22. The following are Spenser's Ariosto-like transitions from the introductory stanzas of a canto to the narrative: *F. Q.*, 1, 3, 2, 2.—3, 2, 3, 2; 9, 3, 1-4.—5, 4, 2-3; 7, 3, 5.—6, 7, 2, 2; 11, 2-5.

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